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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 003172

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/30/2013

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: KING ABDULLAH'S MAY 26 NATIONAL DAY ADDRESS

FOCUSES ON UPCOMING ELECTIONS

REF: FBIS GMP20030525000102

Classified By: Ambassador Edward W. Gnehm. Reasons 1.5 (b,d).

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Summary  
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1. (SBU) King Abdullah devoted most of his May 26 National Day address to preparations for the upcoming Parliamentary elections scheduled for June 17, only giving "hot button" regional issues such as Palestine and Iraq scant mention at the conclusion of his remarks.

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Political Development -- the Message from on High  
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2. (SBU) The bulk of the King's May 26 address to the nation focused on the theme of "political development" and the responsibilities of all Jordanians to ensure that the upcoming June 17 Parliamentary elections "promote our democratic march." The King stated "the time has come to intensify our efforts in order to accelerate the political development process, reinvigorate the role of political parties, and continue to preserve public freedoms . . . alongside economic and social development."

3. (SBU) Turning more directly to the upcoming campaign, the King called on "every brother and sister in this nation, to perform their duties, and to practice their rights in participating in these elections." He then listed a set of personal characteristics that voters should look for in making their selection: "The capable representative . . . should be in possession of a certain measure of science, knowledge and awareness, and integrity and genuine belonging to this nation, one who places national interests above all others, whether personal, partisan or factional. I have full confidence in your perception that is never fooled by glittering mottos, ideologies or ideas that have been outdated and proven failures."

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Only Passing Mention of Palestine and Iraq  
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4. (SBU) Only at the conclusion of his remarks did the King make direct reference to regional issues, noting that "Jordan has been and will remain, Allah willing, devoted to its Arab nation . . . in the forefront of which is the Palestinian cause. Based on this we will continue to support our Palestinian brethren in their stance regarding the "roadmap," that shall lead to the establishment of their independent Palestinian state, on Palestinian soil. As for Iraq, we will do our utmost to ensure its territorial integrity . . . sovereignty over their lands, their right to choose their own independent leadership and future."

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Comment  
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5. (C) A sampling of Embassy contacts noted that the most notable aspect of the King's address was his almost complete focus on political development, compared to previous messages which centered more on economic and social issues. Virtually all welcomed the King's emphasis on encouraging political participation and democratization. That said, however, many also commented that few Jordanians paid much attention to this address. Instead, the talk in coffee shops and around dinner tables this week was not of abstract notions of political development, but rather about news of a more concrete nature: that the government intends to raise prices on many staple goods in the days ahead.

GNEHM